Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01591 01 OF 02 131239Z

46
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-05 MMO-01 /087 W
---------- 070065
P 122157Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3415

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 1591

FOR ARA ASST SEC ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CO
SUBJ: COLOMBIAN PERCEPTION OF THE US

REF: A) STATE 010605 AND B) 75 BOGOTA 2128

1. COLOMBIA'S "PERCEPTION OF THE US" IS FULL OF AMBIVALENCES AND PARADOXES. PERCEPTIONS VARY WITH THE PERCEIVER, AND NO GENERAL STATEMENT CAN BE MADE THAT WOULD NOT REQUIRE ALL KINDS OF QUALIFICATIONS TO BE ACCUARATE. THE PERCEPTIONS DISCUSSED IN THIS CABLE ARE THOSE OF THE TOP-LEVEL GOC DECISION MAKERS--THE PRESIDNET, THE CABINET AND OTHER TOPE ECHELON OFFICIALS--SINCE THEIRS IS THE MOST IMMEDIATE AND IMPORTANT INFLUENCES ON COLOMBIAN POLICIES, AND THEIR ATTITUDES THE MOST CLEARLY EVIDENT.

2. PRECEPTIONS BY GOC LEADERS OF EVENTS CITED IN REFTEL A ARE MODERATED BY INSTITUTIONAL AND EXPERIENTIAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE US AND COLOMBIAN POLICIES WHICH PRODUCE REASTIONS MORE INFORMED AND SYMPATHETIC THAN MIGHT OTHERWISE BE THE CASE. INDEED, FRIENDLY, SYMPATHETIC, SORROWFUL (IN CASES OF ADVERSE PERCEPTIONS) ARE MORE APT ADJECTIVES TO DESCRIBE THE GENERAL MINDSET WITH WHICH THEY OBSERVE US, THAN WOULD BE, SAY, INDIGNANT, GLOATING OR ANTAGONISTIC. NEVERTHELESS, THESE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 01591 01 OF 02 131239Z

EVENTS, AND IN PARTICULAR WATERGATE AND ITS AFTERMATH, HAVE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

ADVERSELY AFFECTED OUR IMAGE IN COLOMBIAN EYES. THIS PERCEPTUAL PROCESS HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY A SEPARATE INTERNAL PROCESS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MATURATION, WITH CONSEQUENT PSY-CHOCULUTURAL CHANGES IN COLOMBIAN SOCIETY, WHICH HAVE ALTERED COLOMBIA'S CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD AND ITS PLACE THRERIN, AND GIVEN RISE TO DRIVES TO PRESERVE AND INCREASE NATIONAL FREEDOM OF ACTION. IN ADDITION, PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND OTHER OFFICIALS, NOTABLY FINANCE MINISTER BOTERO, CARRIED WITH THEM INTO OFFICE CERTAIN EXPERIENCES, ATTITUDES, VALUES, AND CONCEPTS WHICH, IN THEMSELVES, DICTATED A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT CONCEPTION OF US-COLOMBIAN RELATIONSHIPS. WHILE THESE INTERNALLY CAUSED PERCEPTUAL CHANGES PROBABLY WOULD HAVE OCCURRED INDEPENDENTLY OF ANY CHANGED VIEW OF THE US DICTATED BY RECENT EVENTS, THE TWO PROCESSES REINFORCE EACH OTHER (SEE REFTEL B). THE OBSERVATIONS OUTLINED BELOW ARE BROADLY KEYED TO THE QUESTIONS IN REFTEL A:

A. PERCEPTIONS OF US STRENGTH AND VULNERABILITIES HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED MORE PROFOUNDLY BY WATERGATE AND ITS AFTERMATH THAN BY ANY OTHER RECENT EVENT. GOC LEADERS BELIEVE THE US PRESIDENCY WAS SERIOUSLY WEAKENED IN AUTHORITIY AND POWER BY WATERGATE, AND THAT THE POWER BALANCE HAS SWUNG TOO FAR TOWARD THE CONGRESS, WITH A CONSEQUENT PREJUDICIAL EFFECT ON FOREIGN POLICY. THEY SEE IN THIS SHIFT AN INCREASE IN THE POTENTIAL FOR CAPRICIOUSNESS AND EXPEDIENCY IN POLICY MEASURES (E.G. GSP AND VENEZUELA/ECUADOR), AND IN THE POWER OF VESTED DOMESTIC INTERESTS. THEY INTERPRET THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE-CON-GRESSIONAL DIFFERENCES AS REDUCING THE USG'S CAPACITY TO PLAN AND EXECUTE A COHESIVE FOREIGN POLICY AND STRATEGY, AND TO THEM ANGOLA IS EXHIBIT NO 1. THE COLOMBIANS TEND TO THINK OF THIS SITUATION, HOWEVER, LESS IN TERMS OF THE WILLINGNESS OF THE US TO COMMIT ITS POWER TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES--THEY STILL BELIEVE WE WOULD NOT FAIL TO DEFEND VITAL STRATEGIC INTERESTS, ALTHOUGH ANGOLA MAY GIVE THEM PAUSE--THAN IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC INTERESTS UNDERMINING BROADER POLICIES. THEY DOUBT, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE USG COULD CARRY THROUGH ON A POLICY OR COMMITMENT IF IT WAS SERIOUSLY CHALLENGED BY DOMESTIC INTERESTS, ESPECIALLY TRADE AND ECONOMIC POLICIES. THE GOC LEADERS ALSO SEE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AS FRUSTRATED, INCREASINGLY CYNICAL AND DISILLUSIONED AS A RESULT OF THE COMBINED IMPACT OF VIETNAM, WATERGATE,

SECRET

SECRET

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND CUMULATIVE DISAPPOINTMENTS IN FOREIGN POLICY. THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS IS AMBIVALENT. THEY DEPLORE WHAT THEY SEE AS THE ALMOST SUICIDAL AND OBSESSIVE PUBLIC WASHING OF DIRTY LINEN, AND THEY TEND TO INTERPRET THIS AS A MANIFESTATION OF THE DISLOCATION OF THE INTERNAL POWER BALANCE AND PUBLIC MORALE CAUSED BY WATERGATE AND VIETNAM. YET THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THEY ARE ALSO UNEASY AT THE DETAIL OF INTERVENTIIONISM REVEALED BY THE CIA INVESTI-

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

GATIONS. THESE PLUS SUCH THINGS AS THE BRIBERY ACTIVITIES OF MULTINATIONALS HAVE TARNISHED THE US SHEEN AND SERIOUSLY REDUCED THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY ARE PREPARED TO EXTEND CREDIBILITY AND MORAL WEIGHT TO OUR PRONOUNCEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE AND IDEALS. IN SUM, THE OVERALL IMAGE WHICH THE GOC LEADERS HAVE OF THE US IS THAT OF A POWERFUL NATION THRASHING AROUND; AN ALMOST SELF TIED-DOWN GULLIVER; EXPERIENCING AN AUTHORITY--EVEN A SPIRITUAL--CRISIS. THEY DO NOT SO MUCH DOUBT OUR POWER AND STRENGTH AS OUR PURPOSE-FULNESS; NOT SO MUCH OUR WILL AS OUR MORALE; NOT SO MUCH OUR EFFICIENCY AND VITALITY, AS OUR VISION.

B. TO COLOMBIANS, LONG ACCUSTOMED TO A VIEW OF US FOREIGN POLICY AS EFFECTIVE AND BASED ON BOARD DOMESTIC SUPPORT, THE 7-YEAR VIETNAM INVOLVEMENT MUST HAVE LED TO NEW ASSESSMENTS OF THE LIMITS OF US POWER AND CAPACITY. MOST COLOMBIANS DEPLORED THE OUTCOME, BUT LIEVED THE US WAS WELL OUT OF AN INVOLVEMENT WHICH HAD ENORMOUS COSTS IN ECONOMIC AND HUMAN TERMS, WHICH PROBABLY WOULD HAVE HAD AN UNFORTUNATE END SOONER OR LATER, AND WHICH PREVENTED THE US FROM DEVOTING ITS ENERGIES TO THE BENEFIT OR OTHER AREAS, ESPECIALLY LATIN AMERICA. FROM THIS DISTANCE, VIETNAM IS THOUGH OF BY COLOMBIANS LESS AS EVIDENCE OF WHETHER OR NOT THE US WILL KEEP ITS COMMIT-MENTS THAN AS A TRAGEDY FOR THE USE INTERNAL SITUATION-- A TRAGIC SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT SHATTERED THE DOMESTIC CONSENSUS, UNRAVELED PUBLIC MORALE AND CREATED ITS OWN BACK-LASH.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01591 02 OF 02 131254Z

46
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 MMO-01 EB-07 TRSE-00 /087 W
---------- 070284
P 122157Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3416

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 1591

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

FOR ARA ASST SEC ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

C. SEE A ABOVE. THE COLOMBIAN EXPERIENCE WITH A WEAK CONGRESS AND AN ALL-POWERFUL PRESIDENCY CONDITIONS THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THIS SITUATION. IT DOES NOT EFFECT THEIR FRIENDLINESS NOR THEIR HOPE, BUT REALISTICALLY THEY CLEARLY HAVE INCREASED DOUBTS ABOUT US CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT PROMISES AND COMMITMENTS. SOME OF THIS IS PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED, E.G. QUITA SUENO, GSP AND VENEZUELA.

D. GOC LEADERS ARE VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM. THIS PLUS THEIR OWN DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE PRODUCES, AS NOTED, A MORE SYMPATHETIC AND UNDERSTANDING VIEW OF US THAN OTHER SOCIETIES MIGHT EXHIBIT. THEY DO NOT DOUBT THE EXECUTIVE'S SINCERITY IN TRYING TO PUSH FOR CERTAIN MEASURES IN THE CONGRESS, E.G. QUITA SUENO, THE GREEN AMENDMENT, BUT THEY ARE NOT SURPRISED AT THE PROBLEMS. THEIR CONCLUSION IS THAT THE POWER BALANCE IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN DISTORTED (SEE A ABOVE).

E. TRADITIONAL COLOMBIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE US, WHILE STILL FRIENDLY, ARE UNDERGOING A SUBTLE BUT SIGNIFICANT SHIFT AS A RESULT OF THE LINKED IMPACT OF A) THEIR PERCEPTION OF US; B) THEIR CONCEPTION OF THE MODERN WORLD AND THEIR PLACE IN IT; C) THE CHANGES WITHIN COLOMBIAN SOCIETY WHICH HAVE GIVEN RISE TO INTENSE PSYCHO-POLITICAL DRIVES TO PRESERVE AND INCREASE NATIONAL FREEDOM OF ACTION; AND D) THEIR WON PERSONAL ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES AND
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 01591 02 OF 02 131254Z

CONCEPTS. GOC CONCLUSIONS ABOUT US ARE THUS MARKED BY A) A LONG-BUILDING DOUBT ABOUT HOW SINCERE OUR INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA REALLY IS; B) A CONVICTION THAT WE WILL READILY DEPART FROM OUR PHILOSOPHY AND RHETORIC WHEN WE FEEL OUR SELF INTERESTS REQUIRE, SOMETIMES "EXPORTING" OUR PROBLEMS, SOMETIMES USING OUR POWER TO "INTERVENE" OR AS A SANCTION; C) A CONSEQUENT CONCLUSION THAT HOWEVER UNDERSTANDABLE ALL THIS IS, WHAT IT MEANS FOR COLOMBIA IS THAT TO DEPEND TOO MUCH UPON THE US IS TO SUBJECT COLOMBIAN DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL LIFE TO US-DETERMINED INTEREST, PRIOITIES AND DOMESTIC SWINGS AND CRISES. IT IS NOT THAT THE GOC IS BECOMING HOSTILE, FAR FROM IT. BUT IT IS BECOMING HARD-HEADED; LESS DISPOSED TO BE COOPERATIVE JUST TO BE "HELPFUL", MORE CALCULATING OF ITS OWN INTERESTS, MORE DISPOSED TO A TOE-TO-TOE BARGAINING STRATEGY, MORE DISPOSED TO "GO IT ALONE". (SEE REFTEL B.) THE TOTAL GOC PRECEPTION OF THE US, INDEED, IS DEEPLY AMBIVALENT. ON THE ONE HAND IT IS APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHAT IT SEES AS THE INTERVENTIONIST TENDENCIES OF OUR POWER, AND IT WANTS TO EXPAND ITS OWN FREEDOM OF ACTION. ON THE OTHER HAND IT ALSO WANTS THE BENEFITS OF OUR POWER, IT IS BASICALLY FRIENDLY TO OUR SOCIETY AND VALUES, AND IT WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP IF IT COULD ON TERMS IT COULD ACCEPT. THERE IS ALSO

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

UNSPOKEN BUT EVIDENT NOSTALGIA FOR THE STABILITY THAT US POWER AND DOMINANCE ONCE BROUGHT TO THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM, AND A VAGUE HOPE THAT WE MIGHT CONTINUE SIMILARLY TO STABILIZE THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE FUTURE.

F. SEE A ABOVE. THE CUBAN INVOLVEMENT HAS AROUSED GOC APPREHENSIONS ABOUT CUBA'S FUTURE ACTIONS; BUT COLOMBIA STILL SEES ANGOLA AS A "GREAT POWER" PROBLEM, AND IT IS LOATH TO TAKE ANY PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL STAND ON THAT ISSUE ITSELF. THE GOC STAND ON OAS CUBAN SANCTIONS, AND ITS RECENT RENEWAL OF RELATIONS WITH CUBA CONDITION ITS POSITION REGARDING THIS QUESTION (BOGOTA 0570).

G. THE GOC WELCOMES A FRUITFUL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. IT ALSO THINKS THAT COLLECTIVE APPROACHES TO THE US ARE ESSENTIAL TO GIVE LATIN AMERICA NECESSARY LEVERAGE. GOC LEADERS CONSIDER A FUNCTIONING OAS A USEFUL DEVICE FOR THE HEMISPHERE'S DEALINGS WITH US, AND A WAY FOR ALL OF US TO RELATE HEMISPHERE ISSUES TO THE WORLD SCENE. IT IS SKEPTICAL OF THE EXCLUSIVENESS AND WORTH OF SELA BUT IT ACCEPTS THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE CAUCUSING TO DEAL WITH US AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.

SECRET

SECRET

H. THE GOC'S VOTING POSTURE IN THE UN IS PROBABLY DUE PRINCIPALLY TO A TENDENCY TO GO ALONG WITH THE MAJORITY ON MATTERS NOT OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO COLOMBIAN AS WELL AS A DESIRE TO AVOID ASSOCIATING ITSELF WITH "BLOCS" (SEE 75 BOGOTA 11632).

I. AS NOTED IN E ABOVE, THE GOC SEEKS TO EXPAND ITS NATIONAL FREEDOM OF ACTION AND INCREASE ITS LEVERAGE BY DIVERSIFYING ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ARRANGEMENTS--ANDEAN PACT, GROUP OF 77, TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH THE SOCIALSIST COUNTRIES, ETC. IT PARTICULARLY SEEKS TO DIVERSIFY ITS EXPORT MARKETS, AND TO SEEK A VARIETY OF SOURCES FOR CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOFY, INCLUDING THE IFI'S. THIS UNDERSTANDABLE DESIRE TO DECREASE ITS ECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES IS UNLIKELY TO TAKE ANY FORM SERIOUSLY ADVERSE OR DISCRIMINATORY TO THE US, THOUGH WE MAY LOSE SOME MARKETS.

J. THE GOC NO LONGER LOOKS UPON THE US AS A SERIOUS SOURCE OF BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. THE AID PHASE-OUT REFLECTED BOTH A) A GOC CONVICTION THAT WE WERE PROGRESSIVELY DECREASING OUR LEVELS OF AID TO THE POINT WHERE WE WOULD AT SOME FUTURE TIME PROBABLY UNILATERALLY PHASE OUT ANYWAY, AND B) A GOC DESIRE TO REMOVE THE DONOR-CLIENT ASPECT FROM OUR RELATIONSHIP AND REDUCE THE EXPOSURE OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT POLICY DECISIONS TO OUTSIDE LEVERAGE AND DETERMINATION. ON TRADE, THERE IS A STRONG DOUBT THAT WE WILL REALLY OPEN UP OUR MARKETS TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD BEYOND A TOKEN AMOUNT. THEY ARE HOPEFUL, BUT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO BET ON IT. THEY RECOGNIZE THE GOOD WILL INHERENT IN THE GSP ACTIONS, BUT THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IT SIGNIFICANTLY HELPED THEM, AND THEY DO NOT BELIEVE WE WILL EXPAND THE PREFERENCES BECAUSE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

OF THE OPPOSITION OF DOMESTIC INTERESTS AND THE INABILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE TO OVERCOME THEM. IT IS PRECISELY IN THE TRADE AREA THAT THE GOC SEES THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF THE PARALYZING EFFECT ON FOREIGN POLICY OF THE EXECUTIVE-CONGRESSIONAL SPLIT AND THE PLURALISTIC NATURE OF COMPETING DOMESTIC VESTED INTERESTS.
VAKY

SECRET

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, POLITICAL SUMMARIES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BOGOTA01591
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760055-0627
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760257/aaaabxlp.tel
Line Count: 283
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 10605, 76 BOGOTA 2128
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <26 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COLOMBIAN PERCEPTION OF THE US
TAGS: PFOR, CO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006